

News

United States
Department
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Boston, MA 02203

Internet address: <http://stats.bls.gov/r01news.htm>

USDL-99-111

For information: (617) 565-2327

For release: Thursday,

Media information: (617) 565-2331

June 10, 1999

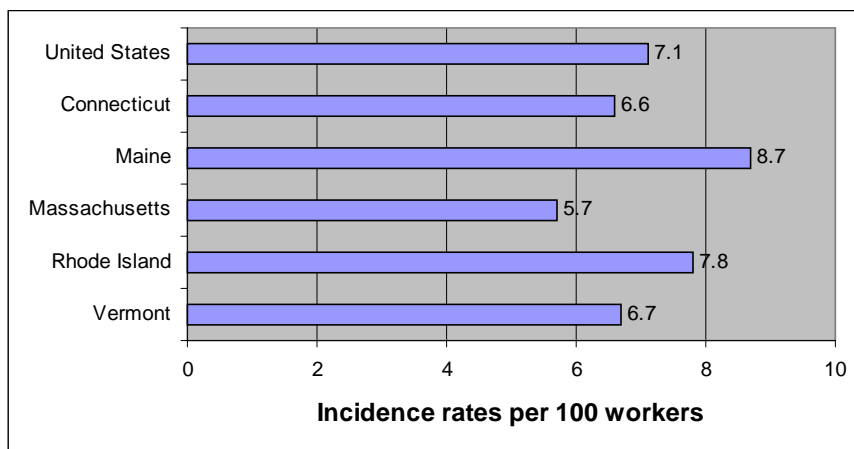
Fax-on-demand: (617) 565-9167

Request fax document code: 9720

Workplace Injuries and Illnesses in the New England States, 1997

Summary data from a 1997 survey of job-related injuries and illnesses sustained by private industry workers in the United States and in five New England states has been released by the U. S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. According to Denis M. McSweeney, Regional Commissioner, only Maine, with an injury and illness incidence rate of 8.7 cases per 100 full-time workers was well above the national incidence rate of 7.1 cases per 100 workers. In contrast, Massachusetts, with a rate of 5.7 cases per 100 workers, was the only participating New England state to report an incidence rate significantly below the national rate. Incidence rates for the other states reporting in the region were 7.8 in Rhode Island, 6.7 in Vermont, and 6.6 in Connecticut.

Chart A. Incidence rates¹ of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses for private industry in the United States and the New England states², 1997.



¹The incidence rates represent the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and were calculated as: $(N/EH) \times 200,000$, where
N = number of injuries and illnesses
EH = total hours worked by all employees during the calendar year
200,000 = base for 100 equivalent full-time workers
(working 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year).

²Data for New Hampshire are not available.

The frequency of work-related injuries and illness varied widely by major industry, both nationally and regionally. Nationwide, manufacturing had the highest incidence rate with a total case rate of 10.3 per 100 workers. In New England, Maine's manufacturers surpassed the national pace of worker injuries and illnesses with a rate of 13.2 cases per 100 workers. McSweeney noted that two other New England states experienced rates below the national average with Connecticut reporting an incidence rate of 8.7 and Massachusetts at 7.1 cases per 100 workers.

Construction had the second highest incidence rate in the nation at 9.5 cases per 100 workers in 1997. In New England, total case incidence rates ranged from 10.3 cases per 100 workers in Massachusetts to 7.3 cases in Maine. Only Maine's incidence rate was significantly lower than the construction rate nationally.

The injury and illness rate for finance, insurance, and real estate was the lowest nationally among major industry divisions averaging only 2.2 cases per 100 workers in 1997. In New England, rates ranged from Maine's 4.2 to Massachusetts' 1.6 cases per 100 workers.

Injury and illness case incidence rates are calculated based on the number of cases and hours worked by all employees in a calendar year. In New England, Massachusetts recorded the highest number of total reportable cases at 124,300, consistent with its having the highest employment level in the region. Cases in the other reporting states numbered 79,200 in Connecticut, 32,700 in Maine, 23,600 in Rhode Island, and 12,900 in Vermont. Total reportable cases include lost workday cases plus those cases without lost workdays.

Nationally, almost 47 percent of injuries and illnesses were serious enough to require recuperation away from work or restricted duties at work, or both. The number of lost workday cases due to occupational injuries and illnesses occurred at a rate of 3.3 cases per 100 workers in 1997. Among the New England states, the incidence rate of lost workday cases ranged from 4.5 cases in Maine to 2.9 cases in Massachusetts.

McSweeney pointed out that the 1997 rates do not include those injuries and illnesses resulting in death as these data are collected under a separate program, the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. Based on the latest available data, there were 163 fatal work injuries in New England in 1997.³

³ Revised and updated 4/99.

Technical Note

The Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses is a Federal-State program in which employer reports are collected from about 164,000 private industry establishments and processed by state agencies cooperating with the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational injury and illness data for coal, metal and nonmetal mining and for railroad activities were provided by the Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration and the Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration. The survey measures nonfatal injuries and illnesses only. The survey excludes the self-employed; farms with fewer than 11 employees; private households; and employees in federal, state, and local government agencies.

The annual survey provides estimates of the number and frequency (incidence rates) of workplace injuries and illnesses based on logs kept by private industry employers during the calendar year. These records reflect not only the year's injury and illness experience, but also the employer's determination of which cases are work related under current recordkeeping guidelines of the U.S. Department of Labor. The number of injuries and illnesses reported in any given year also can be influenced by the level of economic activity, working conditions and work practices, worker experience and training, and the number of hours worked.

An occupational injury is any injury such as a cut, fracture, sprain, amputation, etc., which results from a work-related event or from a single instantaneous exposure in the work environment. An occupational illness is any abnormal condition or disorder, other than one resulting from an occupational injury, caused by exposure to factors associated with employment. It includes acute or chronic illnesses or diseases that may be caused by inhalation, absorption, ingestion, or direct contact.

The survey measures the number of new work-related illness cases, which are recognized, diagnosed, and reported during the year. Some conditions (for example, long-term latent illnesses caused by exposure to carcinogens) are often difficult to relate to the workplace and are not adequately recognized and reported. These long-term latent illnesses are understated in the survey's illness measures. In contrast, the overwhelming majority of the reported new illnesses are those that are easier to relate to workplace activity (for example, contact dermatitis or carpal tunnel syndrome).

We encourage users interested in learning more about occupational safety and health statistics to call our information office in Boston, MA at (617) 565-2327. The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) Program tracks all fatalities in the American workplace. Also, the Internet web site located at <http://stats.bls.gov/oshhome.htm> has data for both fatal and nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses.

Table 1. Incidence rates ¹ of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses for the United States and selected New England States by private industry division, 1997

Industry	United States			Connecticut			Maine		
	1997 Total Cases	Lost workday cases		Total Cases	Lost workday cases		Total Cases	Lost workday cases	
		Total ²	With days away from work ³		Total ²	With days away from work ³		Total ²	With days away from work ³
Private Industry ⁴	7.1	3.3	2.1	6.6	3.2	2.2	8.7	4.5	2.2
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing ⁴	8.4	4.1	3.0	10.1	5.1	4.2	6.4	3.2	2.6
Mining ⁵	5.9	3.7	2.9	5.6	3.8	1.9	1.9	1.0	[⁶]
Construction	9.5	4.4	3.6	9.0	4.2	3.8	7.3	4.0	2.8
Manufacturing	10.3	4.8	2.4	8.7	4.2	2.3	13.2	7.0	2.7
Transportation and public utilities ⁵	8.2	4.8	3.7	8.0	5.0	3.7	5.0	2.7	1.9
Wholesale and retail trade	6.7	3.0	2.0	6.3	2.9	2.2	8.1	4.1	2.2
Finance, Insurance, and real estate	2.2	0.9	0.7	1.8	0.9	0.6	4.2	0.9	0.6
Services	5.6	2.5	1.7	6.1	2.9	2.0	7.9	4.2	2.3

Industry	Massachusetts			Rhode Island			Vermont		
	Total Cases	Lost workday cases		Total Cases	Lost workday cases		Total Cases	Lost workday cases	
		Total ²	With days away from work ³		Total ²	With days away from work ³		Total ²	With days away from work ³
Private Industry ⁴	5.7	2.9	2.2	7.8	3.9	2.8	6.7	3.0	2.2
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing ⁴	10.7	6.2	3.1	-	-	-	6.2	2.4	2.4
Mining ⁵	3.1	1.8	1.6	-	-	-	6.6	4.0	3.4
Construction	10.3	5.2	4.6	7.6	3.0	2.8	7.5	3.9	3.8
Manufacturing	7.1	3.6	2.3	9.5	5.2	3.3	8.7	4.0	2.7
Transportation and public utilities ⁵	8.9	5.6	4.3	12.4	8.6	6.9	5.4	3.1	2.6
Wholesale and retail trade	5.6	2.7	2.2	6.5	3.3	2.9	5.5	2.3	2.0
Finance, Insurance, and real estate	1.6	0.6	0.5	2.2	1.1	1.0	1.7	0.4	0.3
Services	4.8	2.5	1.9	7.9	3.2	2.1	7.2	3.0	2.1

¹ The incident rates represent the number of injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time workers and were calculated as: (N/EH) x 200,000, where

N = number of injuries and illnesses

EH = total hours worked by all employees during the calendar year

200,000 = base for 100 full-time workers (working 40 hours week, 50 weeks per year)

² Total lost workday cases involve days away from work, or days of restricted work activity, or both.

³ Days-away-from-work cases include those which result in days away from work with or without restricted work activity.

⁴ Excludes farms with fewer than 11 employees.

⁵ Data conforming to OSHA definitions for mining operators in coal, metal, and nonmetal mining and for employers in railroad transportation are provided to BLS by the Mine Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, and Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. Independent mining contractors are excluded from coal, metal, and nonmetal mining industries.

⁶ Incidence rate less than 0.05.

Note: (-) Dashes indicate data not available.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses in cooperation with State agencies.

Table 2. Number of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses for the United States and selected New England States by private industry division, 1997

(thousands)

Industry	United States			Connecticut			Maine		
	1997 Annual average employ- ment ¹	Total cases	Total lost workday cases ²	Annual average employ- ment ¹	Total cases	Total lost workday cases ²	Annual average employ- ment ¹	Total cases	Total lost workday cases ²
Private Industry ³	101,666.5	6,145.6	2,866.2	1,393.6	79.2	38.6	453.7	32.7	16.8
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing ³	1,765.4	112.7	55.8	15.6	1.3	0.7	6.3	0.3	0.2
Mining ⁴	595.9	36.3	23.1	0.7	[⁵]	[⁵]	0.1	[⁵]	[⁵]
Construction	5,637.1	492.5	230.7	56.4	4.7	2.2	23.3	1.6	0.9
Manufacturing	18,656.9	1,921.4	901.9	275.5	24.0	11.5	87.9	11.4	6.1
Transportation and public utilities ⁴	6,170.8	497.5	290.5	73.1	5.4	3.4	22.4	1.1	0.6
Wholesale and retail trade	28,583.6	1,523.9	678.8	353.3	18.2	8.4	139.8	8.7	4.4
Finance, insurance and real estate	6,952.2	142.0	54.2	130.0	2.2	1.1	27.2	1.0	0.2
Services	33,304.8	1,419.3	631.0	487.4	23.3	11.2	146.6	8.6	4.5

Industry	Massachusetts			Rhode Island			Vermont		
	Annual average employ- ment ¹	Total cases	Total lost workday cases ²	Annual average employ- ment ¹	Total cases	Total lost workday cases ²	Annual average employ- ment ¹	Total cases	Total lost workday cases ²
Private Industry ³	2,657.6	124.3	63.9	379.8	23.6	11.8	229.5	12.9	5.7
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing ³	20.7	1.6	0.9	[⁵]	[⁵]	[⁵]	3.1	0.2	0.1
Mining ⁴	1.3	[⁵]	[⁵]	[⁵]	[⁵]	[⁵]	0.6	0.1	[⁵]
Construction	99.9	9.2	4.6	14.5	0.9	0.4	12.9	0.9	0.5
Manufacturing	446.6	31.2	15.9	79.7	7.5	4.1	46.3	3.9	1.8
Transportation and public utilities ⁴	129.8	10.8	6.8	15.1	1.7	1.2	11.7	0.6	0.3
Wholesale and retail trade	707.2	28.5	13.9	98.4	5.0	2.6	65.2	2.8	1.2
Finance, insurance and real estate	208.8	3.0	1.1	25.1	0.5	0.2	11.8	0.2	[⁵]
Services	1,043.4	40.1	20.5	142.2	7.8	3.2	77.9	4.4	1.8

¹ Employment is expressed as an annual average and is derived primarily from the BLS-State Covered Employment and Wages Program. Employment in private households (SIC 88) is excluded.

² Total lost workday cases involve days away from work, or days of restricted work, or both.

³ Excludes farms with fewer than 11 employees.

⁴ Data conforming to OSHA definitions for mining operators in coal, metal,

and nonmetal mining and for employers in railroad transportation are provided to BLS by the Mine Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor; and the Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. Independent mining contractors are excluded from the coal, metal, nonmetal mining industries.

⁵ Fewer than 50 cases.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses in cooperation with State agencies.